



PRESS RELEASE
SENATOR MARTHA M. ESCUTIA
30th Senate District

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**GOVERNOR SIGNS ESCUTIA BILL
ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS**

Sacramento, CA – Governor Gray Davis has signed into law SB 1895, a domestic violence bill authored by Senator Martha Escutia (D - Montebello). The bill would require the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, one of two state agencies that funds domestic violence shelters and programs, to consult with an advisory group of domestic violence experts in administering OCJP grants and programs.

Senator Escutia introduced SB 1895 after chairing a Senate hearing on domestic violence shelter funding that revealed substantial communication problems between the funding agencies and the shelters they serve. As the other state funding agency for domestic violence programs, the Department of Health Services, appeared to benefit from a requirement that it consult with domestic violence experts in administering its shelter grants, one of several suggested reforms to the funding process included the imposition of a similar requirement on OCJP.

SB 1895 will require OCJP to consult with shelter advocates, battered women service providers, representatives of women's organizations, law enforcement, and other groups reflecting the ethnic, racial, cultural, and geographic diversity of the state. The advisory group will assist OCJP in developing its grant application criteria, issuing grants, and providing support and advice to grant recipients.

According to Senator Escutia, "both OCJP and the shelters are eager to improve their lines of communication, and the use of an expert advisory group will help them do so. Advice from experts on the front lines of domestic violence service provision will help OCJP be a better partner to its shelter clients – an active source of help and support, instead of just the holder of the purse strings."

